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Українські перспективи імерсивної журналістики

Кирилова О. В.

Дніпровський національний університет імені Олеся Гончара

Розглянуто зміни у науковому дискурсі щодо дефініції поняття «імерсивна журналістика» та визначено основні етапи критичного осмислення феномену. Вивчена роль технологічного фактору як концептотворчого чинника VR-комунікації. Досліджуючи відео-сюжети формату «відео 360 °», опубліковані на офіційних YouTube-каналах телекомпанії *1+1* та *Радіо Свобода Україна* у 2015–2019 рр., із застосуванням методології Уітмера – Сінгера виокремлено чотири групи факторів, що забезпечують присутність у віртуальному середовищі. Проаналізовано декілька форматів відео: новинні сюжети, соціальна реклама, спецпроєкти, відеотрансляції, мультимедійні проєкти, серед яких наявні як подієвий, так і авторський контент. Визначено, що фактори постійно взаємодіють і впливають один на одного, чинячи вплив і на головні складники VR-ефекту – присутність, залученість та занурення. Сюжети, що претендують на максимальну ефективність, мають робити ставку на сенсорні фактори та фактори відволікання, бо саме від них залежить дієвість імерсивного комплексу «присутність+залученість+зануреність». В аналізованих сюжетах ієрархія факторів виглядає наступним чином: на першому місці фактори відволікання (що є логічним), але друге місце посідають фактори реалістичності, не зважаючи на формат тексту. При цьому акцентується, що реалістичність повинна виходити на перший план, якщо імерсивні технології застосовуються при створенні новинних сюжетів, і читач не має можливості керувати композицією, присутність формується через занурення в оповідь. Авторські публіцистичні тексти створюються із застосуванням методів, що дозволяють користувачам впливати на хід оповіді, пропонувати власний хронотоп, створювати різні рівні емоційного занурення через, наприклад, максимальне залучення. Світова практика доводить ефективність даного принципу, але ним не користуються українські медійники. На сенсорні фактори та фактори керування припадає дуже мало уваги, яка здебільшого розподіляється між візуальною складовою та прогнозованістю дії, які самі по собі є невід'ємними елементами публіцистичних відеосюжетів.

Ключові слова: *імерсивна журналістика; VR-контент; відео 360 °; українські медіа; 1+1; Радіо Свобода Україна.*

1. Introduction

Problem statement. Theoreticians and practitioners of social communications have been dealing with the development of immersive journalism for quite a long time. World leading media not only have some experience in creating immersive journalism projects, but also constantly invest in technology development, offering the users updated, functionally expanded products. Immersive narrative is associated with VR modeling, engaging an audience in AR and expanding worldview capabilities through MR. The group of leaders has been formed among the content producers, as it was described in previous studies (q.v. [1]). Ukrainian media are cautious about the possibilities of immersive narrative. Today, only *Radio Liberty Ukraine* can be called a leader in the creation of the content. From time to time there are projects that claim to be included in the structure of immersive discourse, but there is no ground for empirical material.

Purpose of the paper. The aim of the scientific paper is to distinguish the reasons for the low efficiency of journalistic texts in 360 ° video to optimize the further development of the Ukrainian immersive journalistic product.

Research object. 360 ° video publications on *1+1* YouTube channels and *Radio Liberty Ukraine* (2015–2019).

Latest research works and publications analysis. A number of scientific studies regarding the specifics of immersive journalism has increased significantly during the years 2017–2020. The phenomenon is subjected to thorough analysis, involving a solid methodological apparatus. So, the works written by R. Mabrook & J. B. Singer (2019), K. Van Damme, A. All, L. De Marez & S. Van Leuven (2019) [3], S. L. Nielsen & P. Sheets (2019) [4] are interesting from the point of view of the VR content features studying [2]; the effectiveness of immersive technology in news discourse is being investigated by S. Kang, E. O'Brien, A. Villarreal, W. Lee & Ch. Mahood (2019) [5], T. Aitamurto (2019) [6]. A. Paíno Ambrosio i M. I. Rodríguez Fidalgo (2019) generally announce the emergence of a new communicative model in immersive journalism [7], but it's a bit premature in our view. S. Pérez-Seijo & X. López-García (2018) [8], E. Sirkkunen & Uskali (2019) [9], W. McDonald & B. Avieson [10] deal with VR ethical

Kyrylova O., *Candidate of Philological Sciences (Ph. D.), Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Mass and International Communication, e-mail address: kyrylova_o@fszmk.dnulive.dp.ua, tel.: +380563731233, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5393-0138, Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, 13, Naykova str., Dnipro, 49050, Ukraine*

Кирилова О. В., *кандидат філологічних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри масової та міжнародної комунікації, електронна адреса: kyrylova_o@fszmk.dnulive.dp.ua, тел.: +380563731233, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5393-0138, Дніпровський національний університет імені Олеся Гончара, вул. Наукова, 13, Дніпро, 49050, Україна*

problems. The problems of immersive text formation are explored by D. Dowling (2019) [11], A. Paíno-Ambrosio & M. I. Rodríguez-Fidalgo (2019) [12], and the *AP* world news agency offers the media "A guide for journalist in a world of immersive 3-D content" [13].

Research methods. In the article the videos in the 360 ° video published on the official *1+1* YouTube channels and *Radio Liberty Ukraine* during the years 2015-2019 are analyzed. Technical assessment of immersive materials was made with the help of the vidlQ Vision for YouTube service. The data are presented as of the end of the year 2019. When analyzing the immersive component of the videos, the Whitmer – Singer method [14] was used, with the help of which it was possible to determine the degree of the user presence in the video. The identification of 4 groups of factors (control factors, sensory factors, distraction factors and realism factors) allows us to understand what possibilities a user has to influence the environment, whether their functional is clear, whether there are tools for modifying objects, how much sensory information is provided, how fully and consistently the feelings are stimulated, if it is possible to focus on VR incentives without paying attention to irritation coming from the physical environment, whether the environment produces continuous incentives connected to each other, how close the VR environment is to the real world, how intense the disorientation after returning to the real world is. In the process of initial analysis, it was determined which of the published stories have the greatest potential. According to vidlQ, the most effective of the 39 videos available on the *1+1* channel are 'The world inside out 360 °' and '360 ° main Christmas tree. Immerse yourself in the center of a bright New Year's holiday'. Among 28 stories on the *Radio Liberty Ukraine* channel, the leaders are 'March of Defenders of Ukraine to Independence Day' and 'Carpathian Buddhists: the way from Donbass to the mountains'. These 4 videos in 360 ° video format were analyzed with the help of the Whitmer – Singer method.

2. Results

The technological factor affects not only the degree of the use of immersive techniques in media production, but also the qualitative level of the analysis of the phenomenon of scientific discourse. At the initial stage of the functioning of immersive practices (1995–2014) the world scientific community has determined its conceptual apparatus, definition, methodological base, etc. F. Biocca & B. Delaney (1995), B. G. Witmet & M. S. Singer (1998), N. de la Peña (2010) D. Small (2011), R. Cruz & R. Frnandes (2011), B. van der Haak & M. Parks (2012) and others made a significant contribution to this process. They defined immersive journalism, identified its concept-forming factors, justified the feasibility of a complex of practical techniques for producing content and set certain development vectors, which proved or, on the contrary, refuted its effectiveness over time. Speaking about an immersive media activity in the first decade of the XXI century, the researchers mainly emphasized the new capabilities of the technology, its development prospects and deontological aspects of its implementation. At the stage of the active attracting of the world's leading media to the development of the immersive content (2014–2017), world scientists such as M.L. Ryan (2015), R. Aronson-Rath (2016), S. Pérez-Seijo (2016), R. Hernandez (2017), A. L. S. Laws (2017) and others have determined the structure-forming components of immersive journalism, its functional specificity and methodological apparatus, the effective use of existing technologies and its commercial component. At the present stage, the number of studies on various topics of immersive media practices is growing every day. We can even talk about the appearance of certain theoretical directions of the study of this phenomenon. In 2019 F. Biocca, who is considered the founder of the theory of immersion together with D. Shin, presented the results of their research on the study of the mechanism of immersion [15]. A. Paíno Ambrosio and M. I. Rodríguez Fidalgo (2019) proposed a new model of "immersive communication" and a model of "structure of immersive journalism" [7]. An overview of existing concepts, employment, opportunities and boundaries of immersive journalism was presented by A. Baía Reis and A. F. Coelho (2018) [16].

The understanding of the phenomenon of "immersive journalism" is also changing. In 2010 this concept was understood as "the use of specific strategies or techniques, especially those, which were made possible by digital technologies, to create a heightened sense of life experience in the audience after the news story was published." Such a definition is found in the "Keywords In News And Journalism Studies" glossary by B. Zelizer and S. Allan [17, p. 56–57]. The authors try to give a general interpretation that takes into account the fact that "the term refers to mundane factors such as dust, dirt or water on the camera lens, blurred focus or shake camerawork and the sound of the journalist's personal reaction to what is being recorded (such as discomfort,

Tab. 1. Characteristics of the *1+1*, *TSN* and *Radio Liberty Ukraine* YouTube channels at the end of December 2019 (with the data obtained from open source https://socialblade.com)

YouTube channel name	Channel URL	The number of downloads	Number of subscribers	Number of views	Year of the creation of the channel
1 + 1 TV Channel	https://www.youtube.com/user/1plus1channel	9.3 thousand	1.64 million	924.6 million	2009
TSN	https://www.youtube.com/user/tsnukraine	146.4 thousand	1.62 million	1.25 billion	2012
Radio Liberty Ukraine	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-wWyFdk_txbZV8FKEk0V8A	8.62 thousand	188 thousand	138.4 million	2007

surprise or alarm). On the other hand, it includes devices intended to encourage audiences to interact with story elements or information in a manner that engenders a personalized perspective. The latter includes the use of digital gaming features within virtual environment, as when the visitors to an online news site are provided an opportunity to negotiate the virtual experience of being on the airplane, having crashed earlier that day. Advocates regard immersive journalism as a way to supplement traditional, objective reporting with a more subjective sense of connection, that invites empathy and understanding. Critics, by contrast, associate it with the infotainment suggesting that it offers an egocentric form of reporting that substitute the main essence by the colorful visuals" [ibid]. At the same time N. de la Peña (2010) in the large-scale collaborative study "Immersive Journalism: Immersive Virtual Reality for the First Person Experience of News" where he introduces the concept of immersive journalism, explains it as "the production of news in a form in which people can gain first-person experiences of the events or situation described in news stories" [18].

Today, "immersive journalism" is a subcategory of journalism that uses virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), mixed reality (MR) and similar technologies to provide those engaging in such technologies with a sense of being wholly engrossed in the news story, thus allowing the audience of the news to form a direct impression of the ambience of the story [1; 19; 20; 21]. Moreover, "the technological component in this case is fundamental, not only in the process of transmitting and receiving the message, but also in relation to the intrinsic characteristics of the message itself. The coding and decoding performed by the sender and the receiver are determined by the technology itself, since specific software and hardware are necessary for production and consumption and the receiver needs a display device (VR headset) to be able to decode the message … The immersive model involves the isolation of the user with a visualization device, makes it an individual type of communication, so that the message itself stays the same" [7].

Expanding the boundaries of the study of immersive journalism has led to the unification of the concept and its attraction to the existing mass media methodology. There have appeared the researches on the immersive forms of digital journalism [22], immersive communication [23], immersive narrative [24], the implementation of immersive techniques in the transmedia space [25], the impact of immersive journalism on the content factuality [26], the analysis of trends, acquisitions

Tab. 2. *1+1* VR projects according to vidIQ (the data as of December 2019)

Format and the title of the project		The number of views on YouTube	A vidIQ score where 100 is the maximum value	Engagement by vidIQ	The date of posting on YouTube channel	Timing
Format: *TSN* news stories	New Year's Eve for all 360. TSN.ua presents the first spherical video of the opening of the country's main Christmas tree	106 thousand	53.1	1 % (bad); 78.9 % – likes factor: 138 – likes; 37 – dislikes	12/20/2015	0:59
	360 ° main Christmas tree. Immerse yourself right in the centre of a bright New Year's holiday	142.6 thousand	54.4	1 % (bad); 83 % – likes factor: 122 – likes; 25 – dislikes	12/20/2016	0:59
	See the 360 ° unique TSN release	49.8 thousand	51.6	1.5–2 % (average): 91.1 % – likes factor: 542 – likes; 53 – dislikes	03/24/2017	48:02
Format: social advertising	National Anthem of Ukraine 360 °	32.6 thousand	51.9	3–5 % (good): 96.8 % – likes factor: 809 – likes; 27 – dislikes	12/30/2016	1:39
Format: special projects	Voice of the Country 360 ° (Averages based on the analysis of the 7 videos)	57.4 thousand	47.9	1 % (bad): 84.6 % – likes factor	04/08–11/2017	
	Dancing with the stars 360 °	13.9 thousand	40.1	0–1 % (bad): 78.4 % – likes factor	09/01–05/2017	
	World inside out 360 ° (Averages based on the analysis of the 2 videos)	100 thousand	52.8	0–1 % (bad): 98 % – likes factor	09/07–21/2017	
	My country 360 ° (Averages based on the analysis of the 25 videos)	3.8 thousand	33.6	0–1 % (bad): 93,1 % – likes factor	12/06/2016–12/27/2017	

and prospects of immersive multimedia [27]. The conceptualization of immersive journalism is gradually coming to a conceptual level and scientists are trying to enter it into the system of the categorical apparatus of social communications [2; 9; 15; 28].

It should be noted that the detailed study of the phenomenon occurs mainly on the materials of those media resources that are globally important: *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, The Guardian, BBC, National Geographic, Euronews, Associated Press, Reuters* and others.

Tab. 3. VR-projects of *Radio Liberty Ukraine* according to vidIQ (the data as of December 2019)

Format and title of the project		The number of views on YouTube	A vidIQ score where 100 is the maximum value	Engagement by vidIQ	Date posted on YouTube channel	Timing
Format: broadcasting	March of Defenders of Ukraine to Independence Day	23.9 thousand	43.6	5 % (good); 95.4 % – likes factor: 832 – likes; 40 – dislikes	08/24/2019	4:33
	Christmas tree	12.4 thousand	43.8	1.5–2 % (average): 91.7 % – likes factor: 165 – likes; 15 – dislikes	12/19/2018	1:35
	Concert of the "Okean Elzy " at VDNH	12.4 thousand	40.8	1.5–2 % (average): 91.4 % – likes factor: 169 – likes; 16 – dislikes	05/27/2019	3:05
	Stepan Bandera. 110 years old. Torch march in the centre of Kyiv	6.55 thousand	44	5–10 % (good); 73.2 % – likes factor: 224 – likes; 82 – dislikes	01/01/2019	2:13
	360 ° video: the look of the Rosh Hashanah in Uman from the inside	6.3 thousand	37.9	1 % (bad); 76.8 % – likes factor: 43 – likes; 13 – dislikes	10/01/2019	2:38
Format: full story	Carpathian Buddhists: the way from Donbass to the mountains	12.9 thousand	44	0–1 % (bad); 85.1 % – likes factor: 40 – likes. 7 – dislikes	06/21/2017	6:05
	Secrets of the Kiev subway	5.75 thousand	37.5	2–5 % (good); 92.3 % – likes factor: 144 – likes; 12 – dislikes	02/02/2019	9:16
	How the first garbage sorting station in Ukraine works	3.2 thousand	39.7	2–5 % (good); 97.8 % – likes factor: 91 – likes; 2 – dislikes	12/12/2018	5:17
	Walk through the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone	2.85 thousand	34,4	2 % (average); 90,4 % – likes factor: 47 – likes; 5 – dislikes	04/27/2016	2:29
	KyivPryde 2018. Backstage	2.14 thousand	33,2	2–5 % (good); 50 % – likes factor: 24 – likes; 24 – dislikes	06/17/2018	2:49
	Forest Outpost. Second home for children of war	0.9 thousand	29,6	2–3 % (average); 88,9 % – likes factor: 16 – likes; 2 – dislikes	03/06/2017	4:12
Format: multimedia project	Mine. Through the eyes of a miner	2.84 thousand	34,4	4–5 % (good); 98,1 % – likes factor: 16 – likes; 2 – dislikes	08/25/2019	3:03
	Odessa's squat (Averages based on the analysis of the 7 videos)	2.8 thousand	25	1,5 % (average); 63 % – likes factor	07/03–06/2017	
	Lviv taxi driver from Makeevka	2.2 thousand	33,3	2 % (good); 83,3 % – likes factor: 30 – likes; 6 – dislikes	03/14/2017	8:09
	Donbass. Tourism that integrates	1.23 thousand	33,8	2–3 % (good); 88 % – likes factor: 22 – likes; 3 – dislikes	09/22/2017	10:45

National media and the experience of their interaction with this technology are just beginning to become the object of scientific analysis. Ukrainian immersive practices aren't the exception: the scientists engage them in the systemic research only fragmentarily: A. Polisuchenko (2019), J. Druca (2019), R. Rusanov (2018), H. Arhirova (2019), I. Macyshyna (2017). At the same time, we can't talk about significant breakthroughs in immersive journalism on the online platforms of Ukrainian media. Today, none of the media uses the technology of immersive journalism (360 ° video, VR, AR, MR and XR) on the ongoing basis. Such services as NYT VR, Immersive (AR / VR), THE DAILY 360, 360 VR Video (from *The New York Times*), 360 ° Video, WSJ VR (from *The Wall Street Journal*), CNNVR (from *CNN*), Guardian VR (from *The Guardian*), BBC VR, 360 Video and Virtual Reality, 360 Video from BBC R & D (from *BBC*), National Geographic VR, National Geographic Explore VR, 360 ° Videos (from *National Geographic*) are not typical and familiar for the Ukrainian media space. *1+1* TV company occasionally resorted to the techniques of immersive journalism, offering viewers the stories of *TSN* news service in the 360 ° video ('A New Year for all 360. TSN.ua presents the first spherical video of the opening of the main Christmas tree of the country', 12/20/2015; 'The main tree is 360 °. Plunge into the very centre of the bright New Year's holiday', 12/21/2016; 'Watch the unique TSN release at 360 °', 03/24/2017), image online publications ('Anthem of Ukraine 360 °', 12/30/2016), a number of special projects that claim to be included in the immersive discourse (Voice of the country 360 °, Dancing with the stars 360 °, World inside out 360 °, My country 360 °). The characteristics of these products are presented in Tables 1 and 2. It can be seen from these data that the most popular subjects are those with a certain event binding (reports from the opening of New Year trees), or products of author's projects ("The World Inside Out").

Radio Liberty Ukraine asserts itself loudly as a producer of immersive content, which has 14 full-fledged VR projects, 4 broadcasts in the format and a number of through publications. The first attempts to work in this direction appeared in 2016 and have been continuing to this day. The resource prepares its own VR products and publishes immersive texts produced by other manufacturers, for example, the video 'Lviv taxi driver from Makeevka' released by New Cave Media. However, it's too early to talk about the true popularity of such content (q.v. Tables 1, 3). Video broadcasts are the most popular among the viewers (I, II, III, V and VI places in the number of views). At the same time, the video leader in the number of views ('March of the Defenders of Ukraine to Independence Day') does not have the highest vidIQ ratings. The most effective video according to vidIQ ('Stepan Bandera. 110 years. A torch march in the center of Kiev') has 3.5 times less views than the previous one.

It is possible to understand the specifics of Ukrainian immersive content in detail using the Whitmer – Singer technique [14], which has already proved its effectiveness while analyzing immersive videos of *The New York Times* [19]. This technique is aimed at highlighting 4 groups of factors in the structure of an immersive text:

- control factors – c (degree of control, immediacy of control, anticipation of events, mode of control, physical environment modifiability);
- sensory factors – s (sensory modality, environmental richness, multimodal presentation, consistency of multimodal information, degree of movement perception, active search);
- distraction factors – d (isolation, selective attention, interface awareness);
- realism factors – r (scene realism, information consistent with objective world, meaningfulness of experience, separation anxiety/disorientation).

The experience of leading manufacturers of immersive product demonstrates certain relationship. Those publications that offer event content focus on realism factors, which, if it is impossible to influence the course of the story, immerse the user in the event. Publications with a complex structure, several history deployment algorithms rely on control factors, involve the user in the course of the narrative as much as possible. It is easier to present this trend in the form of schemes:

Event text: r → d/s → c

Text with complex structure: c → d/s → r

In the course of the analysis of the most popular videos presented in the table. 2 and 3, we took into account the fact that the factors constantly interact and influence each other, affecting the main components of the VR effect – presence, involvement and immersion. Based on the Whitmer-Singer's theory, «… Control Factors may affect immersion but not involvement, while Realism Factors should affect involvement but not immersion … Sensory Factors and Distraction Factors should affect both immersion and involvement» [14, p. 228]. So, the videos claiming maximum efficiency should rely on sensory and distraction factors, since the immersive complex "present + involvement + immersion" depends on them. Moreover, in fact, the hierarchy of factors in the analyzed videos looks as follows: in the first place are the distraction factors (which makes sense), but the second place is taken by the realism factors despite the format of the text (q.v. Table 4).

On the other hand, Ukrainian media pay no attention to the fact that the trend is getting widespread among the leaders of VR content producers: "when immersive technologies are used to create news stories and the reader is not able to control the composition, realism comes to the forefront, presence is formed through immersion in the story" [19, p. 52]. Author's journalistic texts are created by using the methods that allow users to control the course of the story, propose their own chronotope and create different levels of emotional immersion through, for example, the maximum involvement. This approach is usually effective, but it is not used by Ukrainian journalists. Sensory and control factors are usually overlooked, the attention is usually paid to the sensory modality and the anticipation of an action, which are integral elements of journalistic videos (q.v. Table 4).

3. Discussion

The sporadic attitude of the media towards the production of 360 ° content indicates the lack of good prospects in the technology. It was admired in the years 2016-2017, when the projects were announced and systematically implemented by the resources but were not able to reach their full potential. There are several reasons for this, in our opinion. Firstly, this is due to insufficient technical training of the authors, lack of

Table 4. The presence and assessment of the effectiveness of the factors of presence according to the Whitmer – Singer in immersive stories on a scale from 0 to 3, where 0 is the absence of the factor, and 3 is the maximum severity

	Control Factors (c)					Sensory Factors (s)						Distraction Factors (d)			Realism Factors (r)			
	degree of control	immediacy of control	anticipation of events	mode of control	physical environment modifiability	sensory modality	environmental richness	multimodal presentation	consistency of multimodal information	degree of movement perception	active search	isolation	selective attention	interface awareness	scene realism	information consistent with objective world	meaningfulness of experience	separation anxiety/disorientation
1+1																		
The world inside out 360 °	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	1	1
	c̄=1,3					s̄=1,3						d̄=2			r̄=1,75			
360 ° main Christmas tree. Immerse yourself right in the centre of a bright New Year's holiday	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	1
	c̄ =1,2					s̄=1,3						d̄=1,7			r̄=1,75			
Radio Liberty Ukraine																		
March of Defenders of Ukraine to Independence Day	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1
	c̄=1,2					s̄=1,5						d̄=1,7			r̄=1,5			
Carpathian Buddhists: the way from Donbass to the mountains	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1
	c̄=1,2					s̄=1,3						d̄=1,7			r̄=1,5			

awareness of the nuances of the process of content creation. Secondly, this is due to the lack of experience in constructing the composition of an immersive story. Unfortunately, this experience, has not multiplied due to the low popularity of the format. And finally, the audience's unwillingness to be engaged in the immersive discourse either with the help of special equipment (for example, VR glasses) or through the regular online platforms (q.v. Engagement by vidIQ in Tables 2 and 3). Today, there are cases, in which 360 ° video is as the part of a multimedia narrative (long read), rather offline text and it looks harmonious. This trend is clearly illustrated by the special project of Radio Liberty of Ukraine "Mine-360. Through the eyes of a miner". But despite the world recognition of the project – bronze in the category "Best Experience-Story" of the ninth international award The Lovie Awards – the project did not reach the highest level of popularity among the users. A full story in a 360 ° video format has 2.8 thousand views on the YouTube channel. As well as the elements of the multimedia long-read "Mine-360. Through the eyes of a miner'', the videos on average have only 300 views each (less than 1% of engagement according to vidIQ estimates).

4. Conclusion

Today, immersive journalism is a rather promising technology, which is invested by the leading world media, and is being increasingly discussed in the scientific discourse. At the same time, Ukrainian online resources have no need to pay their attention to the 360 ° video. We see several reasons for this. Firstly, this is caused by the lack of financial opportunities for systemic production of a sufficiently valuable product. Secondly, low technical training of manufacturers makes it necessary to turn to third-party production studios like New Cave Media and Sensorama for help in preparation of important projects. Thirdly, there is the lack of optimal media approach to the process of immersive stories creation. Fourthly, there is some unwillingness of the Ukrainian audience to take full advantage of the capabilities of the immersive narrative. Thus, we can't talk about the real prospects for the development of this technology in Ukraine.

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Kyrylova O. Ukrainian perspectives of immersive journalism

Changes in the scientific discourse regarding the definition of the concept of "immersive journalism" are considered and the main stages of the critical understanding of the phenomenon are identified. The role of the technological factor as a concept-forming element of VR-communication is studied. 360 ° videos, published on the official YouTube channels of the *1 + 1* television company and *Radio Liberty Ukraine* in 2015-2019, were studied using the Witmer-Singer methodology. The four groups of factors were identified that ensure the presence in a virtual environment. Several video formats were analyzed: news stories, social advertising, special projects, video broadcasts, multimedia projects, among which there is both event and author's content. It was determined that factors constantly affect each other, influencing also the main components of the VR effect – presence, involvement and immersion. Videos claiming maximum efficiency should rely on sensory and distraction factors, since the immersive complex "presence + involvement + inclusion" depends on them. In the analyzed texts, the hierarchy of factors is as follows: in the first place are the distraction factors (which makes sense), but the second place is taken by the realism factors despite the format of the text. It is emphasized that realism should come to the fore, if immersive technologies are used in creating news stories and the user is not able to control the composition. In this case, the presence is formed through the immersion in the story. Author's journalistic texts are created using the methods that allow users to influence the course of the story, propose their own chronotope and create different levels of emotional immersion through, for example, maximum involvement. World practice proves the effectiveness of this principle, but Ukrainian journalists do not use it. Sensory and control factors are usually overlooked, the attention is usually paid to the sensory modality and the anticipation of an action, which are integral elements of journalistic videos.

Key words: *immersive journalism; VR content; 360 ° video; the Ukrainian media; 1 + 1; Radio Liberty Ukraine.*